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# LETTER DATED 7 MARCH 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward the statement issued by the Office of the President of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia on 5 March 1999 relative to the situation in the talks on the autonomy of its Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

I would be very grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

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Annex

Republic of Serbia
Office of the President
Belgrade, 5 March 1999

Statement

The delegation of the Government of the Republic of Serbia held a meeting on Friday, presided by Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Ratko Marković to review the results of the talks that recently closed in Rambouillet, France, and to discuss the preparations for the 15 March resumption of the talks on the resolution of problems in Kosovo and Metohija.

The President of the Republic of Serbia, Milan Milutinović, also took part in the meeting of the delegation.

The delegation assessed that initial success towards a peaceful settlement of the Kosovo and Metohija issue had been achieved in Rambouillet, thanks to the fact that the delegation has called for a concrete implementation of 10 principles of the Contact Group, especially for an unambiguous respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and also for a full equality of all ethnic communities in determining a future concept for autonomy in Kosovo and Metohija.

The Rambouillet talks have been temporarily discontinued without any concrete results, since a lot still needs to be done. It is well known that a political agreement has not been adopted and is far from being signed soon. A series of key provisions has been put forth unilaterally and they considerably contravene the 10 principles of the Contact Group. Therefore, hard work on the political agreement is pending. Furthermore, there was a transparent and inappropriate attempt only a few hours before the talks were about to close to deliver the documents which had not even been discussed by the Contact Group. These documents are the so-called Annexes 2 and 7 (dealing with the police issues and troops).

The public abroad and especially at home are aware of this. Unfortunately, over the past few days, we have seen false reports about what has been done and achieved in Rambouillet. The United States of America, including some other Contact Group members is deliberately creating confusion, claiming that the talks are at a stage in which, in fact, they are not and also that the political agreement was practically adopted and only needs to be signed on 15 March, to be followed by a beginning of talks on its implementation. By "political agreement", they mean the entire text of the agreement, including chapters on police and troops, namely the text that has not been discussed at all.

In short, a great sham stage-managed by the United States is in the offing. Requests are being made for the signing of an agreement whose major part (over 56 pages) has not been discussed either within the Contact Group or in the talks. Moreover, what is even more cynical and fraudulent is the fact that the parties of the Albanian separatist and terrorist movement are requested to sign the agreement they had made themselves, namely to agree to the occupation of

Kosovo and Metohija by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Requests are also being made for an interim agreement, for the holding of a referendum after three years, for granting full equality to the ethnic Albanian community alone and not to all ethnic communities in Kosovo and Metohija, for accepting a quasi-state in the territory of Serbia and Yugoslavia. What it really means is tantamount to substituting one idea for another, completely different one. Ethnic Albanian separatist parties, terrorists and drug mafias, are asked to accept something they have been asking for over the past years in Kosovo and Metohija: independence with the assistance of their NATO allies. On the other hand, a theory has been advanced that if Serbia does not sign, it will be seen as a party opposing the political settlement.

In addition to this, the Serbian Government delegation bitterly pointed to gross forgeries of a part of the text of the political accord which had been agreed earlier. One of them is a section which has been agreed upon and written down with representatives of the international community, especially with United States envoy Ambassador Christopher Hill, when it was established that after three years, the signatories will examine the agreement with a view to promoting its implementation and reviewing the proposals of any signatory for additional measures whose adoption shall require the consent of all signatories.

A version presented on the last day of the Rambouillet talks referred to the same problem, but contained also a forged new stand that changed things essentially, saying that three years after the agreement takes effect, there will be an international conference to establish mechanisms for the final settlement for Kosovo, based on the will of the people, the opinion of relevant bodies, both sides' efforts towards the implementation of the agreement, the Helsinki Final Act; and there will also be a comprehensive assessment of the agreement and consideration of both sides' proposals for additional measures.

What we have been warning against and saying all along is now actually taking place, resulting in an unprecedented sham, fraught with forgeries. They have never wanted the agreement. The bottom line of this game of talks has been troops and troops alone. Pressure to deploy foreign troops reveals their true goals: an attempt to occupy a strategic part of Europe under a transparent pretext of "imposing peace", although it is common knowledge that there has never been, nor is there any "military confrontation". The entire scenario is aimed at creating artificial "conditions" at one point for proclaiming "independence" of part of the Serbian territory. There are attempts at making a good excuse for an aggression against a sovereign State. No excuse has ever been good enough for something like that.

Most importantly, we have been presented with totally unacceptable documents whose almost every other page directly or covertly contradicted the 10 Contact Group principles.

We have been requested to accept: (a) the President of Kosovo, the Constitution of Kosovo and Metohija and legislative powers of the Kosovo and Metohija Assembly (Parliament); (b) a special system of judiciary comprising the constitutional and supreme courts of Kosovo and Metohija; (c) harmonization with the agreement, namely, a change of the Serbian and Yugoslav Constitutions; (d) the need for obtaining Kosovo and Metohija's consent for changing the Kosovo

and Metohija borders and declaring a state of emergency; (e) the entire agreement as interim and the holding of another international conference after three years to consider the will of the people, i.e., a referendum, in only one part of the Serbian State. This was the height of cynicism on one part of the international community, which has said that it will never accept a referendum in Kosovo and Metohija or its "independence".

In short, it was a diktat that called for an international protectorate with a number of major requests, which the state delegation could not possibly accept.

Despite all this, the state delegation had until the last moment been submitting many amendments and very constructive proposals in line with the demands of the Contact Group for wide self-government of Kosovo and Metohija within Serbia, advocating full equality of all ethnic communities and, consequently, the multi-ethnic character of the province. The state delegation expected the international community to endorse this multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional approach, as opposed to the nationalistic, even Nazi-like, approach of the ethnic Albanian separatist movement.

Unfortunately, owing to the obvious and open obstruction by some Contact Group members, our endeavour did not ultimately produce the desired effects, although the state delegation demonstrated great cooperativeness by demanding a minimum as regards the protection of the national interests, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

This country has done only what any other sovereign country in the world would have done. It was to no avail, although the principles were on our side. Unfortunately, the force was on the other. Force was especially demonstrated through demands that an "international military presence", meaning foreign troops, be accepted even before a political settlement was reached, although the scope and character of international presence had been defined in the agreement concluded between Yugoslavia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). They wanted more: 28,000 foreign troops that should, allegedly, disarm the "Kosovo Liberation Army". This is absurd: such a big army for an alleged fight against terrorists. At the same time, demands were made for the withdrawal of a much smaller Serbian force from Kosovo and Metohija. These and other similar demands were designed to make state authorities take part in the continuing ethnic cleansing of the province of its Serb and other non-ethnic Albanian population, as the international community previously allowed to happen in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Now, the international community wanted to cleanse Serbia of Serbs. This the state delegation could not accept. Any democracy is tested by the degree of protection it provides to all citizens and all ethnic communities equally, but this fact was not heeded. The proposed documents provided for the Albanian national community to have the upper hand in all matters, while others were only to be "protected" minorities.

Taking all this into account, and the way the talks were being held, the state delegation strongly demanded that the Contact Group protect us from all pressures, especially military ones, which were tremendous in Rambouillet. Either troops or no agreement. As if everyone had forgotten that a political

settlement rules out the use of force, which is also prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, some representatives of the international community in Rambouillet did not take this into account. It seemed this country was at fault for not wanting war but a just and peaceful political settlement.

This outcome of the Rambouillet meeting did not surprise the state delegation, but neither did it discourage its endeavour to achieve peace and a peaceful settlement based on international law and justice and international order. The state delegation is ready to resume talks in Paris, in Belgrade, in Pristina or anywhere where a political settlement can be reached. This is an absolute priority. Anywhere, any time, this delegation will work for a peaceful settlement, for wide self-government within Serbia and Yugoslavia, for equality of all ethnic communities. At the same time, this delegation will not give up Kosovo and Metohija, allow its secession or transformation into a third republic. If the state delegation were to agree to this, it would become a traitor to itself, to our citizens, to Serbs, Montenegrins, ethnic Albanians, Muslims, Romanies, ethnic Turks, Gorani, Egyptians, all who live in the province and wish to continue living there in peace and equality.

The public has been informed of the conclusions of the Co-Chairmen of the Rambouillet meeting. These conclusions only give a partial picture of the meeting. They cover up the failure of the organizers and especially the behaviour and positions of the delegation of the ethnic Albanian separatist movement. The camouflage did not work, as the ethnic Albanian delegation had written to the Co-Chairmen openly demanding the deployment of NATO troops and clearly explaining the purposes of a referendum and especially clearly indicating whom it considered to be the "people of Kosovo" that were to be allegedly consulted before signing an agreement.

Such an approach can hardly lead to a proper political agreement. However, the first stage of the talks has ended. Before the end of the talks, the state delegation clearly underlined in a letter to the Co-Chairmen - and they included it in their conclusions - that wide self-government for Kosovo and Metohija must also include the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The delegation also pointed out in its letter that there can be no independence for Kosovo and Metohija or its transformation into a third republic. This is why all elements of self-rule must be understood and clearly defined when the time comes for the agreement to be concluded. This should be adequately set out and resolved in future endeavours. The state delegation is ready to attend a future meeting on this issue.

We therefore rightly expect the international community and especially the Contact Group to see reason and create appropriate conditions for the resumption of the talks. Negotiations and peace are in any case, especially this one, better than unprecedented war which might engulf the entire region. With this conviction, Serbia and Yugoslavia expect that talks will be resumed free from bias of any kind, pressures or threats, and are ready to make their constructive contribution to this end.

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